1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1985 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

TECHNOLOGY

824 237 Archer technology uses only wood, fiber, and vegetable plants for raw material, with exceptional use of skin for quivers and baby slings, and fur for decoration of body and of the hunting bow.

• 372 Fire making is unknown, though the usage of fire itself is universal. Schebesta (1941) stresses its importance to the Mbuti, and says that embers are always carried about, even on the march. A new fire is lit by taking embers from an old one. Fire is further the only means of lighting, the wood *akata* giving the best light. [373] [416] When walking at night, the Mbuti always carry firebrands and light the path by scattering sparks in all directions. Fire is used, apart from purposes of cooking, giving warmth, and lighting, as the only adequate weapon against the black ants that not infrequently invade Mbuti camps in the middle of the night and force immediate withdrawal. Trilles (1932) and Le Roy (1897) both mention fire making by different techniques among the Pygmies in the then French Congo, but no reliable source has mentioned the practice of fire making among Ituri Pygmies. Many travelers and observers mention its absence.

411 [114] As confirmed by all explorers except Burrows (1898) who spoke of the Aka, the Mbuti use poison on their arrows (Schebesta, 1941). They never, however, put poison on arrows tipped

[P.169-B]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 169-D]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

This method of hunting serves only for antelope; Schebesta never saw okapi, wild boar, or big game brought in from such a hunt. 224 [36]

The beat hunt seldom takes place, says Schebesta (1961, 98), because it requires the participation of large numbers of people, often from more than one band, including women and young girls, who can seldom be persuaded to take part. Also, it occupies an entire day. Ritual preparations include setting fire to certain herbs by the hunt leaders (an old man and an old widow in the hunt described by Schebesta). This produces a dense smoke, the sight and scent of which bring the hunters to the attention of their God. The old widow asks that rain should not surprise them. The ritual takes place a little way off from the camp; the other members of the hunt when they arrive rub their temples and eyes with the cinders, as did the old couple, in order to see better. The *hegbe* hunt then sets out, and, when a suitable spot is found, the women make their petards from a certain bush (Efe: *magbu*). By rolling the leafy 224 372 [TK] [782] [828] 224 824

[P.172-C]

[TEXT CONTINUED ON PAGE 173-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 3-(1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

535 and old, men and women, is the dance, which is accompanied by music and song." Most of the instruments Schebesta (1941, 244–253) describes serve to accompany dance. He makes three classifications: sportive, mimetic, and erotic dances. The former are not mere exuberant acrobatics, but follow certain choreographic rules; he does not give the rules. The usual form of dance is circular, he says: an outer circle composed of women and an inner circle of men, with the drummer in the center. If there are only a few dancers, the men may dance solos, leaping one by one in toward the drummer, then back to their places in the still-moving circle.

• [372] Schebesta also mentions the existence of fire dances, one of which he witnessed on the occasion of a birth in the camp.

535 831 Erotic dances generally involve two lines of dancers, one line male, one female. Each woman comes out of the line in turn and makes an

[P.188-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

on the contrary, tall, and wanders through the forest, striking the trees as he moves about. According to some of these central archers, the mother of Toré is Mato (Matu), who lives in the mountains, and his father is Pucho-pucho; according to others, his mother is Ou-ororo, and his father Ogbi-oro, names which, according to Schebesta's linguistic studies, contain the words for fire and menstrual blood. The Chthonic God is, under many of his names, referred to as the original possessor of fire (as is the chimpanzee). Among the southern archers the possessor of fire is Mbali, and Bali is fire itself. These southern archers also regard Toré as lord of the world and creator of all things. For this reason they make offerings to him of all their products from hunting and gathering. (In this region the term Lodi is replacing Toré.)

All Efe agree that Toré sends death. The southern archers believe this because they disobeyed his command to refrain from following and spying on him. Others say that Muri-muri had confined death in a pot, which he gave to a toad with instructions to take the greatest care of it. But the toad gave it to a frog who leapt away with it and broke it, thus letting death escape.

[P 189-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[ARCHERS]

[P. 190-A]

782 God of the Undergrowth in the form of invoca-
776 tions, offerings, propitiatory sacrifice, and perhaps also a number of the practices of the *tore* association. There is no cult to any celestial divinity, of which the Mbuti have only vague notions.

782 Invocations usually concern the weather (re-
82 quests for a storm to pass over speedily or to be
372 diverted) and are often accompanied by the
534 blowing of the *segbe* magic pipe, indicating with the arm the direction the storm should take. The archers also may light a special fire and cover it with leaves so that a thick smoke rises. The God of the Undergrowth sees the smoke, smells its fragrance, and hears the *segbe* pipes. His attention is thus drawn to the plight of his "children." There is a similar ritual of fire and
782 smoke in connection with the hunt, particularly
224 the apparently ancient *begbe* beat hunt, as is
372 mentioned above (p. 172). Invocations frequently use the term "father" or "grandfather."

Ir Turnbull E-4. 3 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[P.193-C] [ARCHERS]

The celestial God is an old man, with a beard which brings wind and storm to the earth world when it shakes. The Mbuti respect him, but offer no cult to him; he is too far removed and plays no direct part in the life of the earth world. He is linked to it, however, and plays his part in the Pygmy rationale as the ultimate source of all vital force which creates and gives life. It flows from the sky God into human beings, but his superabundance of the life force insures his permanent overlordship. The Mbuti regard him as the source of all creation and the support of the universe, without seeking to understand how he creates and preserves, or why he destroys by reclaiming the vital force he dispenses.

Schebesta states that the Mbuti place this sky God in the moon and thus even *deus otiosus* is involved in dualism, for the moon by its brightness is associated with fire, and by its periodicity with menstrual blood—the two symbols of life and death. (Both fire and menstrual blood have the dual association.)

[NET HUNTERS]

TECHNOLOGY

• 392 Fire making is totally unknown, even as it is to some of the neighboring village tribes, according to Putnam. Glowing embers wrapped in phrynium leaves are carried everywhere, even on short journeys. They are also used, as described by Schebesta, for light at night and for fighting off invading ants. Another form of light (Fig. 31a), in the shape of resin torches (KiBira: *karuku*), is sometimes used, but at no time is wood specially cut (such as the *ekata* mentioned by Schebesta) to make firebrand torches. Campfires are always made the same way—three logs, their ends pointing to the center, where kindling is placed and where cinders form on which cooking is done.

411 Poison is used on untipped arrows, as described by Schebesta. These arrows are carefully protected by leaf covers until used. They are much more widely used than the metal-tipped arrows, largely, as the Mbuti admit themselves, because they are such poor shots.

Sometimes spearheads are also untipped, the wooden points being fire-hardened, but there is no evidence that these are poisoned, and they are becoming rare.

462 In none of the normal routine work in a Pygmy camp such as that described by Putnam is there any specialization, except in so far as certain tasks are divided between men and women.

[P 201-B]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

In the left hand they carry a smouldering log end wrapped in a phrynium leaf, and they may also carry a baby on the left hip in a sling. Special utensils of Mbuti origin include a bark container (Fig. 32a) sealed with *kasuku* resin, and a fragile vine basket lined with leaves (Fig. 43b). Hardwood rhythm sticks, *ngiengie* (Fig. 43c), are cut and used during the honey season.

222 [372] [854] [415] [534]

Drinks, Narcotics, and Stimulants

276 [184]

The information available is exactly the same as that given by Schebesta for the archers. Pipestems and bowls are borrowed from vil-

[P 210-C]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

Games and pastimes are the same as those for the archers, with the addition of a form of spear practice. A large forest fruit is fixed to the end of a vine which is swung around in a circle. Men standing in a group surrounding the swinger throw their spears as the fruit comes past them, dashing in to retrieve the weapons that miss. 526 [184]

Legend telling, like dance and song, is an important medium of expression as well as recreation. Instrumental music among this group of Mbuti is virtually nil. In a hunting camp a *lukembi* (*sanza*) may be heard, a musical bow, and possibly, though rarely, a notched flute. If the camp is near a village the men may borrow or steal a drum for the dance; otherwise, they use sticks as clappers, either shaved at the end to give a flat sound, or left smooth to give a sharp, hollow sound. The women add to the rhythm with handclaps, and both sexes with stampings of the feet. 538 534 533

There are two kinds of secular dance, erotic and imitative, as described by Schebesta. The third kind of dance described for the archers, [P. 212-D] 535 [831] [372] [84]

I: Turnbull E-6 6 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P. 213-A]

535 the dance through fire, is reserved for special re-
[372 ligious occasions among the net hunters. Secular
184] dancing takes place at any time of the day, any day, but nearly always there is dancing in the evening, and, when the moon gives enough light, the dance may continue through most of the night. Except for the religious dances, men, women, and children take part in the dancing together.

533 Song is even more important to the net hunters. There is not much information in the Putnam material, except that different types of song exist for men and for women and for different occasions, but from my own observations among this group there are, as with dance, clearly two major divisions. One is between secular and sacred, and the other is between songs proper to men and songs proper to women. Certain songs are sung only by members of the men's religious association, the *molimo* (Schebesta: *iusomòa*), and those proper to members of the women's association, the *elimo* (Schebesta: *elimo*). Then there are songs for hunting and songs for gathering. Each of these

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

two manifestations of the same spiritual being and that both this being and the *molimo* are in some way connected with death. The former causes death (whether in some or all cases is not known), but the latter seems to be different in that it appears only the day following death and can restore normality to the community in crisis (not only death) rather than cause crisis. The *molimo* association calls to the *molimo* "animal" in times of crisis and brings it physically into the camp, according to Mrs. Putnam's notes. It appears to be propitiated by offerings of food, which is consumed by members of the *molimo*, and by dance and song.

No information is given as to any belief in the origin of death, or of any human failings that might cause it other than violation of the *molimo* by a woman or of the *elima* by a man. Infringement of rules of exogamy and other taboos may or may not cause death; individual opinion among the net hunters varies considerably on such matters.

According to local informants, the only villagers that have the *molimo* are the Bira, Lese, Ndaka, and Bali.

Lightning is also a symbol of misfortune but not necessarily of death. When lightning comes at night, campfires may be covered so that the

[1] In her notes, Mrs. Putnam invariably uses the term *ezumbo* or *ezumbo ha lesumbo*.

[P 238-0]

I: Turnbull E-4. 3 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

[P.239-A]

821
3/12

flames will not be seen, then the lightning will pass. Mrs. Putnam reports that on one occasion a particularly large and bright fire was built during the night because, according to the Mbuti, a Lese woman who had died recently was "tapping in the trees." Fire is reported to be extinguished in one of the *molimo* dances, among the net hunters as well as among the archers.

Totem and Taboo

614
225

Putnam distinguishes four kinds of taboo for the net hunters. The first is related to what he calls the clan totem.[1] Each clan, he says, has its own private totemic animal. This is believed to be not the clan ancestor but, rather, connected with that ancestor in mythology, as having rescued him from danger or helped him in some enterprise. Putnam mentions seven species of antelope and 12 species of monkey that appear as totemic animals among the Mbuti bands in his area. Other animals, not important as food to the Pygmy, are also totemic animals but, according to Putnam, less frequently. Slow game and vegetables, that is, food collected by women, are never used as totems.

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1985 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

formed. Mrs. Putnam says that the Pygmies may ask the villager to perform the ceremony, but it is also certain that the villagers themselves, if they do not get enough meat from the Pygmies, insist on performing it. The use of a *segle* whistle is mentioned only once by Patrick Putnam. It was incorporated in a hunting net (Figs. 34–35) for the hunter to blow into to attract the antelope. This hunter was the camp joker. *Segle* whistles and pipes may assume many forms, being incorporated in fur headbands (Fig. 51a) or left loose (Fig. 51b). Other hunting magic found among the net hunters, not mentioned by Putnam, is *awjo* (Fig. 51c), an antelope horn in which is kept a paste made of animal parts, rubbed over the eyes and head of the hunter before the hunt.

Segle are not to be confused with *madi* (Fig. 51d–e) pipes, which are used only during the honey season.

Rain magic involves the covering of the campfires with leaves but evidently without much faith in the efficacy of this action, as all practical precautions are taken as well, such as putting hunting nets under cover, bringing fire inside the huts, and taking in barkcloth that has been left outside to dry. Further, the use of

[P 240-3]

1: Turnbull E-4. 5 (1951-1955) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

[NET HUNTERS]

CP. 240-C]

leaves to cover fires is an effective way of keeping them burning during a rainstorm, is not always accompanied by the production of smoke (thought by some to be an offering), and is never described as being accompanied by any invocation. As far as the descriptions and my own observations go, it could be a simple precautionary measure taken to preserve the all-valuable fire.

Mrs. Putnam was told that barkcloth should not be beaten if it is going to rain, but this may also be for purely practical technological reasons. She once saw an old Pygmy blow a *segbe* pipe a number of times, looking at the sky, in an avowed attempt to avert the rain. When it rained the old man simply shrugged his shoulders and took shelter.

On another occasion, when it threatened to rain and spoil the dance one evening, the young men and boys all seized leaves and ran down to the stream and back, beating the leaves on the ground. They evidently did not wait to see if this magic would work, and all retired to their huts.

PLATE 33 $\frac{2}{A}$

AN MBUTI GATHERER WITH HER TYPICAL BASKET AND TUMP LINE,
EPULU DISTRICT, CENTRAL ITURI

462 Women and girls do nearly all the gathering, though a man may pick any mushrooms or
482 fruits he happens across on the trail. Women are also responsible for the maintenance of
222 fire. Not knowing how to make fire, women always carry a smoldering ember, as does this
372 woman, wrapped in fire-resistant leaves.

1/A, /Plate 33 appears on page 299--Analyst/

[P. 298]

Turnbull E-4. 6 (1951-1955) IMS for Pygmies for Visual

1: Turnbull E-4,5 (1951-1955) 1960 704 Premises 704

[p.299]

/Plate 33/
/Caption appears on p. 298/

2i Turnbull E-6 (1951-1958) 1961 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

doubt wholly dependent upon the villagers for all metal goods. So also with pottery, there being absolutely no knowledge of pottery manufacture among the Mbuti.

But it is significant that none of the authorities who cite the lack of these foodstuffs and metallurgical and ceramic skills among the Mbuti as an example of their economic dependence also cite the absence, among the Mbuti, of all knowledge of fire-making.[1] By the same reasoning this should make them dependent on the villagers for matches. The point is that mere lack does not constitute a necessary structural dependence, unless the lack is vital. We have to ask ourselves how *necessary* is this apparent economic dependence of the Mbuti upon the villagers.

It will be shown in the section on "The Forest World" that there is no question of any absolute dependence of the Mbuti upon the villagers for food, in that context, except insofar as luxuries ultimately tend to become necessities. It will be seen that in the forest their technology is sufficient to keep them supplied with all their basic needs. It will also be seen that metal is not a necessary part of their technology, any more than is pottery, or knowledge of fire-making.

In the village world, however, the Mbuti are completely dependent upon the villagers. Hunting and gathering in the neighborhood of any village are likely to be equally poor, and it would be difficult if not impossible for an Mbuti band to keep itself supplied with forest foodstuffs from a village headquarters. It would involve a half day's march, at least, to reach a suitable hunting area, and the physical effort alone would be enough to discourage even the most ardent hunter. But even more important is the fact that by living in the village the Mbuti would be out of touch with the forest, and would have no way of knowing the exact whereabouts of the game at any given time. Living in a hunting camp with the forest all around them, the Mbuti know only what is going on in their immediate vicinity. As the game moves

[1] Some Mbuti have learned to use matches, when available, and a few know of the fire drill from contact with their village neighbors. There is absolutely no indigenous method of making fire, however, and it is a point of no small importance to their social life that each household maintains its own hearth. Embers from this hearth are carried, usually by the woman, wrapped in fire-resistant leaves, during the hunt or while on the trail. At each new camp site, the family hearths are kindled from embers of the old family hearths, preserving a distinct sense of continuity. Whenever a communal hearth is required, as for the *molimo*, communal participation is accentuated by the compulsory contribution of embers from each family hearth. Whereas matches are rarely used, becoming quickly damp and useless, even if available, they are *never* used for kindling family or communal hearths, but only for such relatively mundane purposes as lighting a pipe or cigarette.

In Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

are contradicted every day without necessarily causing any mention, but in the event of anything more serious happening later, the earlier incidents will be recalled and made into an issue that successfully embroils, ultimately, the entire camp.

But more curious than this slight emphasis on normal, or mildly abnormal and trivial patterns is the lack of emphasis at times where one would have thought the occasion to be of major concern to the band. Birth and marriage, for instance, provoke little comment, and concern primarily the nuclear families and not the band. The relationship between these particular attitudes and the nonlineal and fluid composition of the band is plain. The constant movement of families from one band to another, alone, opens up different and important avenues for recruitment that has the advantage of being selective.

With this in mind, let us look first at the daily life of the Mbuti, briefly, for it is of little structural significance, then at the life cycle.

Among both net-hunters and archers five days out of seven are likely to include some hunting. Even though it would be possible for the Mbuti to kill a surplus of game and dry the meat and store it for their own future use, as indeed they do for the benefit of the villagers, such measures are no more to their taste than to their advantage. On a hunting day the family rises at dawn, the mother and her older daughters who are at the age of puberty go to the stream to wash themselves and bring back water for drinking and cooking. The menfolk go to a different part of the stream, and generally slightly later. The older men might be excessively lazy and use the water brought back for drinking as bath water.

While the women cook the light morning meal and set food aside for taking with them on the hunt, the men shake out and inspect their nets, bows and arrows, their sons helping them or simply looking on. If the forest is dry, the hunt may start leaving within an hour of dawn, otherwise it may not leave until midday. Usually it sets off about two hours after sunrise and may return anytime between midday and dusk. There is no particular order for leaving the camp, but the youths usually go ahead, and not far away they light a fire at the base of a small tree, as an invocation to the forest for a good hunt. Men and women alike stop by the fire on their way, but with no ceremony. It does serve, however, as a place for a more cordial exchange of greetings than generally takes place in the still sleepy camp.

Back in the camp some old grandparents, or maybe only a handful

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1956) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti

though he expected as much. Rather more serious is a medicine called, in the Epulu district, *anjo*. It is a paste made from the heart, brain and eyes, sometimes from other parts as well, of some highly prized game. The paste is charred and placed inside the horn of that animal, which is then inverted and stuck in the ground, usually near the family hearth. The paste is put on the body, most often the forehead, of the hunter and of members of his family. Sometimes it is even offered to privileged friends. It is believed to convey to the hunter the senses of the animal so that he will be able to deceive the animal as well as foresee his movements. However, the use of this individual magic is considered antisocial in many bands, particularly if it appears to be attended by success at the cost of others in the band. It may cause disputes, and then generally all such medicine is collected and burned.

By far the most significant magico-religious acts connected with the hunt are more of the order of religion than of magic. One is the hunting song (with or without dance), and the other is the hunting fire. The song or the dance may precede or follow a hunt. It is distinct from any other form of song or dance. The song form is rather complex and demands co-operation in a manner comparable to that demanded in the hunt itself. The dance is suggestively imitative of a successful hunt, but is by no means mere mime. Like the song form, the choreography is quite distinct, and is not used in any other context.

The hunting fire in the southern part of the net-hunting area takes the form of a fire lit near the trail just before the hunt sets out in the morning. It is generally lit by youths, always at the base of a young tree. When blazing it is covered with leaves, so the heavy smoke is given off. Men and women, as they pass by the fire on their way to the hunt, may stop to gossip, or they may pay no attention. I have not seen or heard of any accompanying ritual or invocation, the only explanation ever stated being that the fire is to rejoice the forest, and it would seem to have the same primary purpose as song and dance, that of attracting the attention of the forest. It is certainly believed that the fire will insure the protection of the Mbuti and help toward success in the hunt.

Further north, another form of hunting fire is used, associated with rather more ritual. There the net-hunters build the fire within the camp, whereas in the south it is always just outside. The fire is sur-

2: Turnbull E-S (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa Fol

rounded by a vine that is carefully staked into the ground by V-shaped twigs. Within the circle long twigs, clean of bark, sometimes simply burned to create a pattern, are stuck into the ground pointing in the direction the hunt is to take place. Any animal caught is brought back and placed within the circle before being divided.

There is undoubtedly village influence to be found in some of the more elaborate magical practices. The Mbuti themselves consider *molo* as village magic, also the magic sticks within the hunting-fire circle. The fire, however, is used everywhere, and regardless of any other accompanying ritual, there is no ritual attitude toward it other than the belief that it will secure the attention, hence the blessing, of the protective forest.

One clear example of village influence is that in any village context the Mbuti are likely to state sexual taboos connected with the hunt. These vary according to the village tribal custom, and may involve prohibition of sexual intercourse before the hunt, either as a permanent rule (which would be inconvenient for people who hunt almost daily) or for special occasions or classes of people. A menstruating woman and her husband are forbidden to take part in the hunt, according to some village customs. A pregnant woman may be under restrictions, as may be her husband, and childbirth involves further restrictions among many village tribes. To all such customary practices the Mbuti gladly pay lip service. In the forest, however, forest values prevail, and I have come across no sexual taboos associated directly with the hunt. Indeed, the hunt is considered by many, married and unmarried, as an excellent and exciting time to slip away into the bush and copulate. But sexual activity is above everything else a matter of personal taste. If a pregnant woman stays in camp, it is more likely because she feels unwell. If a father stays behind with his wife and her newborn child, it is probably because he wishes to be with them, though there are sometimes stated prohibitions on hunting or eating meat until the family net traps a large antelope. This will be made the occasion for lifting the taboo and for naming the child.

However, it is impossible to discover any consistent pattern of actual behavior, the only consistency appearing in stated behavior, and this relates directly to local village custom, which is based on the belief that the forest is ritually dangerous, unclean. Any villager in a position of crisis, such as becoming pregnant, being born, suffering from sickness or even injury, during menstruation or while near

2: Turnbull S-S (1951-1954) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

It is significant that the honey season should be marked among the Mbuti by a special type of song, musically distinct from the other types, and by a ritual dance involving ritual use of fire. I have seen this dance throughout the forest, and heard the same distinctive honey song, the latter being made all the more distinct by the use of special wooden clappers called *nghenghe* by the net-hunters of the Epulu region, *ejopo* or *koko* by the archers further east.

Many different kinds of honey are recognized, and each has its own distinctive taste. All that I tasted were exceptionally sweet except for the *ejuwa* honey, which is very liquid and highly fermented by the time it is collected late in the season. Most honey is found high up in holes in the upper branches of the tallest trees. This is always collected by men and youths who can climb trees, unless the diameter is too great, simply by exerting lateral pressure on the trunk with their arms while they move their feet up, pulling themselves close to the trunk with a jerk as they move their arms up. If a tree is too wide to climb this way, they may loop a vine around it, holding the ends with their hands, or they may climb a smaller tree nearby and jump across where the branches meet higher up. Hollow trunks or branches are used by bees as hives.

Other honey is found a few feet above ground level, again in a hollow tree trunk, and this is the only kind of honey, except for the rare *nundu*, which is found in the ground, that a woman may collect.

The actual collecting procedure is the same. If the entrance to the hive is small, it has to be widened with an ax. Then a leaf tube in which there are smoldering embers is introduced into the hole, and by blowing through the other end, the Mbuti fills the hive with smoke and drives out the bees. Most of the bees do not sting at all, and those that do sting do not seem to cause any great pain. Even before they have all left the hive the collector puts his arm in and pulls out handfuls of honey, eating it on the spot, sharing it with friends who may be helping him. When they have had their fill they throw down what is left to those waiting below. If by themselves, they fill a special bark honey container or a basket lined with leaves, and bring the rest back to camp. There it is shared by all, either being eaten in the comb or warmed in leaf containers over the fire. If it is full of white maggots it is particularly prized, and will almost certainly be warmed to loosen the honey until the maggots wriggle, at which point it is consumed with relish.

If the honey is very dirty, full of rotten bark or leaf mold, it is wrapped in a leaf container and immersed in water. When it is pulled

2: Turnbull E-1 (1951-1960) 1961 PO4 Pygmies PO4
Mbuti

Because of the rarity of ritual performances there is one which should be mentioned here, though it seems unique and known only to net-hunters as far as I could ascertain. The ritual involves the building of a fire, with much greater care and concern than the hunting fire or the molimo fire, and it is believed specifically that the correct performance of this ritual will lead the Mbuti to honey and/or bring the bees, and their honey, closer to the Mbuti. A full description is given in the section on religion and magic (pp. 231–33). Here it need only be said that the preparations, including the digging of small trenches for water and the use of special woods and leaves, are designed to give the maximum amount of smoke. The lighting of the fire is accompanied by blowing on the *madè*[a] (*ele*: **aglw**) whistles, through which water is first poured.

All being taken into consideration, the relative lack of magic or ritual associated with food quest, the lack of interest shown in certain readily available forms of food supply such as fish, and the lack of food taboos all confirm the abundance of forest foods and the adequacy of Mbuti technology. This is important in considering the over-all economic system.

ECONOMIC ASPECTS OF TERRITORY

While the environment does not, through areas of shortage or abundance, determine the location of hunting bands, it does provide natural boundaries which form convenient borders between each hunting band. The total territory is more than ample for the total population, and the even distribution of game and vegetable foods means that there are no preferential areas that might make for rivalry between one band and the next. There is, in any case, a safety factor in that the bands are arranged side by side, in several vast circles, in the center of each of which the boundaries are so loosely drawn that there is effectively a no-man's-land, in which anyone may hunt and where bands occasionally, though rarely, may come in contact with each other.

The only territory to be considered, then, is that of the individual hunting band. This is again, in all cases except possibly the area

[a] The *madè* is a conical pipe, open at both ends, made of two hollowed-out cane sections cut lengthwise, bound together either by **ndusu** twine or by strips of vine. The pouring of water, which is comparable to the pouring of water through the molimo trumpet (see Chapter 14) may have ritual significance, but is explained invariably and unhesitatingly as being necessary simply to get a better sound. It swells the wood and binds the sections closer to each other.

B. Turnbull B-5 (1951-1960) 1965 PD4 Pygmies PD4
Mbuti

55. A girl returning from the village related how there was an administrator there who took her photograph. Masisi demanded the money, and the girl said she did not ask for any. Masisi's wife said the girl was a fool, that she could have got fifty francs. In fact, she was a thief because she deprived everyone of cigarettes. The girl was still standing up where she arrived in camp, and Masisi's wife went up and forced her to sit down, and thrust her private parts into the girl's face as a gesture of contempt. The girl's parents said nothing.

56. A man burped loudly during the evening meal, and brought forth insults from all sides that would have developed into a fight had Moke not taken the *banje* sticks and started beating them, a sign for the molimo singing to begin.

57. A girl, decorated with leaves stuck in her bark cloth, was dancing vigorously and some of the leaves kept falling out. She blamed the younger children and started beating them until they fled, crying. Nobody interfered.

58. Amaboru, for no known reason, refused to allow his wife to move the fire from their hearth when changing camp. She went to her brother's hut and sat there sulking for nearly a whole day. Amaboru, fed by his mother, paid no attention.

59. Occasionally, however, even the most trivial origins can lead to a serious and lasting rift. Such a dispute, described more fully in *The Forest People* (Chapter 6), involved two brothers, Aberi and Masalito. It started when Masalito went to visit his brother on a rainy day. Masalito was in the main camp, Aberi in Cephu's camp. Aberi was asleep, and his wife insulted Masalito twice, first by refusing to smoke the same pipe, second by offering him an old and dirty pipe-stem to take back to the main camp with him. This led to a fight between the two brothers which was temporarily healed by the force of ridicule levelled against Aberi, and further subdued by the action of the molimo in beating Masalito's hut as a sign of the displeasure of the forest.

However, the bad feeling remained, if hidden, until Aberi's death.

DISPUTES CONCERNING THEFT

Theft, apart from the kind practiced by Pepei, was unknown except in the village context. Sometimes when Pepei was caught he was thrashed; on the other hand, sometimes he was tolerantly laughed at and allowed to go his way. There was once, however, a curious case that was never settled.

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of honeycomb pressed down above it. Two sticks are prepared in this way by a hunter, and when the cloth is set on fire the hunter waves them both in the air. He then hands each of them to a youth, and the two youths run through the camp and out into the forest around the camp. The womenfolk clap loudly until the youths return and rather unceremoniously put the sticks down near the central fire.

The honey dance also separates the sexes, the women pretending to be bees, men the honey gatherers. Yet another separation, symbolizing the power of the women, is the medicine that is said to attune one's hearing so that one can hear the larvae wriggling in the honeycombs, high up in the trees. A woman prepares a stick which, when blown through, produces a misty spray. She blows into the ears of all the men. The men say that the bubbling noise they hear is the sound of larvae and grubs eating honey, and that it will guide them to the hives.

There is seldom any doubt as to where honey lies, and it is plainly the social rather than the economic importance of the honey season that is being celebrated. This is most clear in the great *anghe* medicine, in which the age groups are further differentiated and which includes attention to orientation that is quite unique in my experience (this, together with several other features, is so singular that it cannot be adequately explained at the moment, but is nonetheless described for its intrinsic interest).

At the *kumu'nghe* (hearth of honey), a number of youths chop a special *tembu* wood into kindling (the only time I have ever seen kindling prepared). Four hunters supervise. The four hunters then put their honey axes down in the hearth, blades to the center. One of the hunters lines the axes up so they align with the cardinal points of the compass. This done, each hunter takes his ax and draws it toward him, cutting a trench along that line. In this way four trenches, two feet long and three inches wide and deep, are cut. In the center a square is cut so that the four corners indicate the intermediate compass points. The position of the sun is consulted to insure correct alignment.

A senior hunter has meanwhile cut four lengths of *teka* vine, carefully bound so that its juices do not escape. He removes the binding and allows the juice to fill the center square, after which water is added to fill the trenches. The combination of juice and water is said to be *mota*, or powerful. Each vine is laid in a trench, projecting at the extremities. Two youths then take out the vines and shake them

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Two youths then take out the vines and shake them in all directions, liberally sprinkling anyone who happens to be standing by. Other youths are by now standing about, whistling on their honey whistles, a form of *madi* called *ainghe*. The kindling is then stuck upright in the trenches, beside the *teku* vines, which have been replaced. Children help with this.

A hunter then places a single ember, apparently drawn from any fire, in a *mongongo* leaf and, having filled the center square with *mongongo* leaf stems, he places the coal on top. More kindling is added, crisscrossed much like a house of cards, each piece carefully placed by youths and hunters together. Without fanning, the kindling catches and a dense cloud of smoke is given off. An elder then brings over a bundle of old leaves that have been used for collecting honey, and places them near the fire. He waits until the smoke begins to dwindle, then directs the operation of placing the honey axes in the hearth, waiting for the blades to get warm and then using them to split some *toanghe* wood. The *toanghe* tree and the *tembu* tree are both good honey trees, but the *tembu* tree has to grow "old and fat" before it is favored by the bees.

Elders then carefully arrange the old leaves, adding more as necessary, in a large circle around the fire. Four *ainghe* whistles are stuck in the ashes of the fire, pointing to the cardinals. While elders stand and shout, women gather and loudly clap their hands, and both hunters and youths kneel on the circle of leaves, facing in to the hearth, and begin pounding their fists rhythmically on the ground. The tempo increases to a maximum and is broken off with a sudden shout. This is repeated twice more, after which the hearth is abandoned and camp life resumes as though nothing had happened.

The Mbuti themselves are unable to give any satisfactory explanation of the performance, and it seems to combine elements of genuine magic (for they talk of the smoke attracting the bees and bringing honey to them) and of invocation of supernatural intervention (the *keti* are said to hear the pounding on the ground and will know that the Mbuti want honey). Whatever it may be thought to achieve, however, *anghe* (also *anghelu*) undoubtedly reiterates the division of the band into age groups, a division that is evident throughout the net-hunting season but is not so necessarily a part of activity during the honey season.

However regarded, Mbuti magic implies belief and is to that extent religious, no matter how much it may also be thought to have direct causal attributes, and the belief always supposes the benevolence of

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tled, how good the weather is, and whether or not visiting relatives or friends are expected. Within a few days, however, the festival will begin, and from the moment of its inception its stated concern is to awaken and, even more important, to rejoice the forest. The lesser *molimo* is more often spoken of as "awakening" the forest (*su kongi ndura*), though that too has to be done in a way that will rejoice it. The greater *molimo* should ideally be a festival of sheer joy. The course of the festival becomes more and more a symbolic triumph of life over death, the death of the individual being recognized in the final dramatic stamping out of the *molimo* fire, the fire of life. This is not done, however, until time and time again the fire has been attacked in an effort to destroy it, but has been regenerated by the dances of the men, who in a dance that imitates the act of copulation, with the fire as their partner, fan the scattered fire back into a blaze of life.

It is normally the old woman, who is an integral part of every greater *molimo*, who either by herself or with a girl attacks the fire, dancing through it and scattering it all around. Thus the woman who gives birth to life also seeks to destroy it. She is referred to by no title other than "mother," the same term of address used for the forest in its capacity as giver of life and death. It is primarily the young men who hastily rebuild the fire and fan it back into a blaze with their dance of life. It is frequently said that the women used to possess the *molimo*, but it was stolen from them by the men, and this dance, together with the tying up of the men by the old lady (Turnbull, *ibid.*, p. 323), may well represent in part this early conflict, and the attempt of the women to regain possession of the *molimo*. Whatever the symbolism, it is nowhere clearly stated by the Mbuti, each individual claiming to see something different in the performance. It is generally agreed, however, that it shows how strong the women are, and that they have to be respected by men.

Whether or not there is thought to be any correlation with *pepo* (breath), the power of breath to fan sparks into fire is demonstrated when coals are placed in the end of the *molimo* trumpet. The singer blows as he sings, and the sparks that fly out of the end of the trumpet are greeted by murmurs or even shouts of acclaim.

The trumpet is sometimes referred to as an "animal" of the forest, though this is generally in connection with its morning appearance. Nonetheless it is referred to as needing food and water, and these it symbolically receives. It is also passed through the *molimo* fire and

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765 given fire to eat, just as water is passed through it to "cool" it. It is
372 rubbed with ashes and earth. It is brought into direct contact with
534 every individual by being passed over their heads as they sit around the fire singing, and each individual will at some time or another, at his own whim, scoop up ashes and rub the trumpet with them. And in
[535] the evening appearances of the trumpet at the *molimo* hearth, while
[831] the singer holds one end to his mouth and sings, the youth holding the far end pumps it up and down as he dances in imitation of the sexual act, sometimes holding the mouth of the trumpet close to his genitals, imitating the part of either man or woman. Little doubt is left about the symbolic connection between fire and life.[9]

765 There is an important distinction between the evening and the
561 morning appearances of the *molimo* trumpet, and between the roles
533 played by different age groups. In the evening the singing is primarily in control of the *mangesé*, or elders. Frequently, they have their own fire, the hunters have theirs, and the *kiyana*, or male youths, have theirs. Everyone joins in the singing, the elders maintaining over-all control and the hunters being the most prominent singers, except for the *molimo*-trumpet singer, who may be a youth or a young hunter, being chosen because of his ability as a singer rather than for any
[535] other reason. It is the youths that do most of the dancing at their fire or at the central *molimo* fire (from which theirs is made by taking burning embers and setting them separately). The whole intent of the evening is to rejoice the forest, and this is done by singing throughout the night, and by eating a feast specially prepared from food contributed to the *molimo* hearth. (Just as with food, so with firewood and with fire itself—every single household in the camp is expected to
[535] contribute.) In the early days of the festival the old lady does not ap-
[831] pear, and there is no attempt to stamp out the fire, though erotic dances are constantly being danced around and over it. It is only toward the end of the festival that the nightlong songfest is dramatized by the appearance of the old lady, her dancing through the fire in an attempt to destroy it, and her tying up of the men (referred to
765 as both tying up the hunt and tying up the *molimo*). The evening meetings of the *molimo*, though full of the joy the Mbuti wish to convey to the forest, are nonetheless solemn in that the purpose is

[831] [9] Fire is primarily connected with women; the hearth is often referred to as the vagina; the association of blood and fire is considered particularly dangerous. Thus the association of the male *molimo* trumpet with the fire and the ashes gives the trumpet phallic significance in this context. Elsewhere, this precise symbolism seems unimportant, the important factor being simply the trumpet's masculinity.

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29. A hunting fire is lit to announce to the forest that the hunt is setting out. Hunters on their way will pass by, but no special ritual is performed.

[224]

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[P.276-E]

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31. Cephu's wife, carrying an ember of the family hearth wrapped in fire-resistant leaves, and with her carrying basket on her back, sets off after the hunt. She will act as a beater with the other women and children, and will gather wild foods on the way.

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[222]

Death itself is recognized as deriving from the forest, so is accepted with regret, but there is enormous concern to conceal the regret and avoid any excessive show of grief, for crying is *akami*. The uncomfortable fact of death has to be obliterated from the memory as quickly and effectively as possible, and the band, which has received a blow at its strength, must be rejuvenated in an exaggerated display of all the things pleasing to the forest—good hunting, singing, dancing, feasting and, above all, *ekimi*. More than this, the *molimo*, as we have seen, is a means of reaffirming the effective division of the band into age groups, and through both the participation of the old lady, who demonstrates the power of the women over the men, and through the *ekokomea* dance, the lack of sex differentiation is emphasized. *Ekokomea* may also be regarded in a similar light as the erotic dance over the fire, where the men symbolically copulate over the scattered embers, fanning them to life. Certainly the sexual act is represented in the *molimo* dances, if not in the symbolism of the *molimo* trumpet itself and the way in which it is handled, and there is very evidently expressed concern with the regeneration of life.

The *molimo* is also an occasion on which the band reaffirms all its interpersonal loyalties, and its unity as a band, regardless of kinship considerations. (This is not to deny that the band, and the *molimo*, may at one time have had a more definitely lineal structure.) It is significant that it insists on participation by all adult males, including not only affines but adult visitors living temporarily with the band under an obligation, default in which is punishable by death. Such death itself is said to be brought by the *molimo*; informants differed as to *how* death would actually take place—some said by two spears, some by beating—but in all cases it was held that the *molimo* would bring death to any who did not fulfill his obligations.

Thus the forest is intimately associated with the Mbuti at death, just as it is at birth. The same forest that gives life and strength through the juices of the vine, and through the vine and wooden charms tied around an infant's wrist, may bring death to that infant, if as an adult he fails to rejoice the forest during the *molimo* festival.

Fire, which is the gift of the forest, but whose ownership is disputed, is central in the life of the Mbuti, representing life itself. (One legend has it that fire was first owned by a chimpanzee; another by woman; another by the *keti*. In any case, man [Mbuti] ultimately stole it and now possesses it.) During the *molimo*, men pass their hands through the flames and then rub gently over their faces. The *molimo* trumpet is passed over the flames. Sometimes men put coals

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in their mouths, or hold them in their hands. Burning coals are put in the mouth of the trumpet. When the trumpet enters the camp at night it is preceded by a youth carrying burning embers which he waves in the air and touches to the ground to leave a trail of glowing cinders, the "footsteps" of the *molimo*. And of course the *molimo* fire is the object of attention of the old lady and her attendant. The final extinction of the fire is the signal for the return of the *molimo* to the forest, and the end of the festival.

The festival emphasizes and reaffirms everything of importance in the life of the Mbuti. And perhaps one of the most important things it emphasizes is accompanied by the least ritual—the closing of the path leading to the village. To the same end, but more dramatic, is the way in which a *molimo* festival will come to a complete halt if a villager comes to the camp. For the *molimo* not only reaffirms the unity of the band; it reaffirms the unity of the Mbuti in opposition to the village. It is essentially a "matter of the forest," and the entire system that it upholds operates only in relation to the forest.

In the same way that a solitary villager can transform a forest camp into a village camp, just by his presence, so is any contact between the two worlds, except one of opposition, impossible. The system that the *molimo* recreates in the forest, the very life of the Mbuti that in itself is a ritual of pleasing the forest, cannot persist in the village. The ritual closing of the path is clearly symbolic of the Mbuti concern to keep the village out of the forest, to keep the two worlds apart. When they, as individuals or as a band, leave the forest and visit the village, they do precisely that—they leave the forest. It is this opposition, which is so sharply defined in the *molimo*, that is the basis of the Mbuti relationship with the villagers.

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593 578 persistence in sleeping with Amabosu's sister despite her having just given birth to a child. She evidently felt shame for her brother, but whatever the reason she did not fight back. This only enraged Amabosu further so that his beatings grew to the point where Amaloku was bruised and lame and perpetually in tears. After a week of this 593 the band was well aware of the underlying cause, but it was nonethe- 578 less concerned for the restoration of good relations between Amabosu 622 and his wife. Being outwardly a domestic squabble, nobody interfered, and the camp was silent. The silence was very real, as it can be when the Mbuti get moody, and it settled on the whole camp the moment each beating began. Masisi tried to create minor disputes about hunting, in the hope that Amabosu and his wife would join in, but they were not to be drawn so easily. Even when one very real [685] dispute raged beside them (Pepei having stolen some meat from Sau, Amabosu's mother) they maintained a sullen silence that overcame the band as soon as Pepei had been dealt with by a sound beating.

It was not until Amaloku, in an effort to run away from Amabosu, tripped and fell by Tungana's hearth that the camp had its chance. [252] As she tripped, Amaloku scattered several logs from the fire, upsetting a piece of meat that had been roasting over the coals, casting it into the ashes. Old Tungana let out a yell and his wife slapped Amaloku hard. Amaloku wailed as she had never wailed before, whereupon Masisi and Manyalibo, both great hunters, went to the middle of the camp and jointly denounced Amaloku as a troublesome girl who should be sent back to her people. She had been badly taught, be- [372] cause no Mbuti ever treats fire like that, or throws food into fire. She was no good as a daughter, no good in camp, and evidently no good in bed because she was still without child.

This utterly unjustified and personal attack brought out not only Amabosu but also Ekianga (Amaloku's brother, the basic cause of all the trouble) in common defense of the weeping girl. Masisi and [372] Manyalibo put up a good argument, for it was indeed considered bad to accidentally step into a fire, and the camp was soon in an uproar with the sister-exchange section uniting in defense, supported largely by the youths. The hunters, with the exception of Ekianga and Amabosu themselves, allied with Masisi and Manyalibo. Finally old [198] Tungana stopped everything by whistling and then making one of his rare speeches. It was to the effect that everyone was behaving like [186] villagers, so he might as well go to the village and stay there. He called to his wife to pack her things, and grumbling loudly he grabbed his

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and fathers when youths go around trying to snare food from each hut (the women ultimately letting them have it, often ostentatiously). The opposition of adjacent age levels, and particularly the hostility between sons and fathers, is plainly manifest in the morning rampages of the *molimo* trumpet. The forest itself is symbolized by the leaves that conceal the trumpet (itself the symbol of the life-giving organ), and *ekimi* is the avowed objective sought through song. *Akami*, its antithesis, is symbolized again in the morning rampage, frequently a physical battle between older and younger youths (dividing brothers) and between youths and hunters, and always a wordy battle, with the hunters winning if for no other reason than that there is a limit to the energy even of Mbuti youths.

Thus the *molimo* admirably reinforces social values and allows for the harmless expression of hostility in areas of conflict. The only symbolic representation of sexual conflict is *ekokomea*, and of course the fire dance. But here the symbolism runs deeper, and concerns the ultimate end, for just as *akami* is associated with death, so is *ekimi* associated with life. The fire is not as realistically symbolic as the trumpet, though it is undoubtedly as feminine as the trumpet is masculine. But it is impossible not to be reminded of other instances of the use of fire and sex symbolism.[10]

And perhaps we should see this concern with life not only in terms of the threat of death from the village. Death is a threat to all societies, and for the Mbuti it is probably the one imperfection in an otherwise perfect life; that is to say, it is the one thing for which they have no certain answer, and to a practical people such as the Mbuti uncertainty is imperfection.

Ultimately the efforts of the Mbuti, if not of their system, are directed to keeping the villagers physically out of the forest, an effort that is successful largely because the villagers are only too thankful not to have to go into the forest. But just the fact that one villager can set up a fishing camp in mid-forest and be visited by other villagers, or that a chief can send his representative to a hunting camp to demand (but not necessarily obtain) meat, means that even the forest

[10] For instance, Audrey Richards (1956) writes of the Bemba that access to the ancestral spirits is to be had through the correct handling of fire and sex, and stresses (*ibid.*, p. 30, *seq.*) the ritual association of sex, blood and fire as the *idée maîtresse* behind most of the ritual behavior of the Bemba. Hocart would certainly have seen the *molimo*, and the "baptism of fire" (when Moké passes his hands through the flames and rubs them over his face, then gently touches the hands of all those around), as a request "for the gift of undying life" (Hocart, 1952, p. 47).

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fear, but a recognition of the completeness of a loss that could never be made good. There was a finality and terrible emptiness in old Balekimito's death which could not be answered, for which there was no explanation, not even through sorcery or witchcraft. For the moment it seemed that the Pygmies, faced with the death of an old and well-loved and respected person such as this old lady, had nothing to cling to, and I was genuinely afraid that some of them would come to harm. Young and old alike crowded around the house, trying to force their way to Balekimito's deathbed. They were even fighting to get in, and once inside they fought to get out. At one point several children came flying out in a frenzy and threw themselves onto the ground, beating it with their arms and legs, kicking and biting at anyone who tried to comfort them. Inside, the commotion was even worse—Asofalinda, looking almost as old as her dead mother, had put a noose around her neck and seemed to be trying to strangle herself, full of remorse at having let her mother die. It took three men to take the noose from her neck, and when they finally tore it from her she ran outside and collapsed on the ground, sobbing her heart out.

Even Moke quietly forced his way into the death room and stayed there for a few minutes, saying nothing, making no sound, while tears rolled down his wrinkled face. Then he went out again and helped Asofalinda into the shade. Only Tungana and his wife, Bonyo, remained where they were, outside their hut a few yards away. They were too old for the exertion, and they just sat and cried to themselves, unashamed.

I went to my half-finished veranda to get out of the sun and found Kenge and a number of youths sitting around a fire. No matter how hot it is, there always has to be a fire. After a while the rest of the men joined us and sat silently, as though waiting. Then Moke came into the middle of the veranda and started talking, very softly and quietly, so that it was difficult to hear him at all. The

THE MAKING OF CAMP LELO

The children were running about in the semi-darkness, laughing and playing, without a care in the world; only a few of the older children, eleven or twelve years of age, helped their parents. The older girls carried an extra basket bulging with plantation foods, or else they carried a baby brother or sister on one hip, bending their heads every now and again to reassure their charge with a kiss full of the warm affection of children. Some of the older boys carried their fathers' hunting nets, proudly, leaving the more experienced hunters free to set off in pursuit of any game they might come across on the way.

Fires blazed in front of all the huts, and those who had not already eaten were quickly swallowing what they could before setting off. Two of Ekianga's wives, Arobanai and Loku, were already helping each other, the one supporting the basket on the other's back while the tump line around the forehead was tested for comfort and strength. In the forest, people cannot carry loads on their heads as they do in open country, because of overhanging branches and the frequent obstacles that have to be climbed over or crawled under. So a tump line is used by the Pygmies—a strip of bark a few inches wide, wound around the bundle and passed over the head. The women support this tump line by the forehead, sometimes easing the strain with their hands, but always with the head down, stooping to take more of the load on the back. The men, if they have to carry a load, generally let the tump line lie across the chest and over each shoulder, just to be different from the women.

I went over to where a group of men were drinking *liko,* a brew of forest berries and nuts and herbs, bitter, but warm and stimulating. They suggested that I should go on ahead with Kenge and a couple of other youths. The women would take all day to get there anyway, they said, even though some had already left. They would stop on the way and collect mushrooms and roots for the evening meal.

Only Ekianga sat silent, outside his hut, watching his third and youngest wife, Kamaikan, cooking his breakfast. He ignored his two

222 [482] Tearing large leaves from the undergrowth they made small bundles and hitched them[1] to their belts, using the stems of the leaves for twine.

481 484 [222] [482] Not much farther on we heard loud singing ahead of us, and we came up behind the women who had started early. They had also been gathering mushrooms, but they had larger bundles, and the small children were carrying them in their arms. Unlike the men, the women ambled along slowly, sometimes chatting, sometimes singing. This was not simply because they were happy to be back in the forest, but because by going slowly they could keep an eye open for edible roots and fruits, and by singing and chatting loudly they scared away any of the animals that might otherwise have been [136] startled into attack. There are few dangers in the forest, but there are plenty of buffalo and leopard that would attack without question if you came on them unawares. Even two Pygmies (and they never travel singly if they can help it) will shout and clap their hands as they walk along the forest trails in single file. The only time they are silent is when actually hunting.

372 484 We passed the women and children, and shortly afterward we passed a second group, those who had left before dawn. They were still sitting around the fires they had built to cook themselves a meal. Every woman, when moving camp, carries with her a burning ember wrapped heavily in fire-resistant leaves. None of these Pygmies knows how to make fire. The first thing they do when they stop on the trail for a rest is to unwrap the ember and, putting some dry twigs around it, blow softly once or twice and transform it into a blazing fire. I have never learned what the knack is. Many a time I have been blowing and fanning my fire, trying to get it to come up, when a little slip of a girl, or a boy almost too young to walk, has come along, knelt down, and given two little puffs that have sent the flames leaping upward. It is damp and cool in the forest, and at any time of the day it is pleasant to sit around the fire; but at

[1] [i.e., bundles of mushrooms, - Analyst]

night, when it is cold, the fire gives not only warmth but protection, keeping the animals away.

It was midday when we waded through a marshy patch left by recent floods. Usually there is little marsh or swamp, but every now and again dead branches and fallen trees will block a stream and the whole area will be flooded, perhaps for miles, until a heavy rain washes the obstruction away. We had to splash knee-deep through mud and water for several hundred yards before we reached dry land. The first thing Kenge and the others did then was to find the main stream and wash themselves clean before going any farther.

From here the ground rose steadily and although we could hear streams below us we did not cross any more until just before we got to the Lelo. Up on the ridge the forest was a little thinner, more light filtered through to the ground below, and the world was alive with dancing shadows as the breeze rippled the leaves. But the sun still raised the temperature only to the point where it was pleasantly warm. As we were picking our way down into the Lelo valley we heard distant rumbles of thunder. Kenge stopped and looked up into the tree tops to see which way the wind was blowing. He muttered that it would not rain yet, but if those lazy women didn't hurry up and come and build the huts we would have a very wet night.

But for the moment the sun was shining, and when we finally arrived at the site for our camp it was bright and green and cheerful. It was a natural clearing a couple of hundred yards across, with a patch of trees and bush in the center breaking up the clearing so that it was really two. As large and as open as it was, the trees still almost met overhead. The ground, instead of being covered with leaves, was covered with a kind of grass. Kenge dumped his bundle on top of a little hillock several yards across and said that this was where we would have our house built. He then told me to come and see the Lelo itself, hinting that I should have a good bath.

Apa Lelo, or the Camp of Lelo, will always be one of the most

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and, not being married, had no huts of their own. We had brought our fire into the hut when the rain started, and with the heat of that and of about fifteen bodies I was nearly suffocated. Every now and then the rain found its way through the leaves above and sent a tiny waterfall cascading to the floor. Then someone would stand up and inspect the roof carefully, decide which leaf should be moved, and pushing his fingers through the lattice adjust it. If he moved the wrong leaf it started a leak in another place, bringing howls of annoyance from whoever was beneath. Kenge said it was always like this with a new hut, that was why it was so bad not to be married. If you were married, naturally your wife would get up when it rained at night and fix the roof. But once the leaves had settled down, not even the hardest rain would come in until the leaves got old and dried out and began to curl. Tomorrow, he said, he would cover the roof with dead wood and branches to hold the leaves flat.

The rain lasted only for half an hour, and as soon as it was over everyone came out of the huts. The fires were built up outside again; the women made a few adjustments to the roofs where they had found bad leaks; the men wandered off idly with their bows and arrows to see if they could find a bird or monkey for the evening meal before it was too dark. The huts steamed as they dried out, and a blue haze of smoke hung above the camp and was colored suddenly with orange and gold and red as the clouds parted and the sun on the invisible horizon sent a last blaze of light across the sky. The birds burst into a final chorus of song, and two women argued loudly with each other as to which should have the rest of the leaves that Masamba had cut to help them.

Everyone was tired from the long day's trek and from the flurry of building camp so quickly, and as soon as it was dark and the evening meal had been eaten we all crept into our huts and went to sleep. Kenge, seeing that I was a little concerned, had turned some of the bachelors out, so there were only nine of us. For an hour the

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dabate still had her fine maiden's figure, with firm upstanding breasts. Nobody ever mentioned the fact that they were childless. Kondabate decorated herself more than any other Pygmy girl I have known, and by every possible means, Negro and Pygmy. She not only dyed her body with designs of vines and fruits, painted on with the black juice of the gardenia fruit, but she also had elaborate patterns cicatrized on her stomach, and her teeth were filed to sharp points so that when she smiled or laughed, as she frequently did, she looked just a little dangerous. Kondabate decided to build her house to the north of the hillock, so that she was next to old Sau, and opposite her father.

During the afternoon Amabosu, Sau's son—the great singer—went around from hut to hut with Manyalibo's adopted son, Madyadya. (Manyalibo had offered his molimo for Balekimito's festival, as Ekianga said he had none.) The two youths stood outside the entrance to each hut with a basket and a length of cord made from *nkusa* vine, the kind of cord used for making hunting nets. Madyadya held one end of the cord while Amabosu tied the other in a noose and laid it in the doorway of the hut. The owner of the hut, or her husband if she was not there, would put a small bunch of bananas in the noose, or a manioc root, or a bundle of mushrooms, or perhaps even a small piece of meat, and Madyadya would jerk the string taut. After a brief mock struggle he would haul in the catch and put it in his basket, then go on to the next hut. From every hut the two collected an offering of food in this way. When their basket was full they hung it up on a tree stump beside the central fire that was now blazing between Manyalibo's hut and the hut his daughter was busily making. This fire had itself been made up from offerings of wood collected from each family hearth. I remembered seeing Manyalibo go around taking an ember or log from every fireplace, whether the owners were there or not.

I noticed that only men sat at this fire and asked Kenge why this

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no longer worried me that the trumpet was a metal drainpipe instead of a piece of bamboo or wood, because now that I could not see it I realized that Ausu was right. It was the sound that mattered. As the men sang in the camp, the voice of the molimo echoed their song, moving about continually so that it seemed to be everywhere at once. During a lull in the singing it started giving animal growls, and the men looked around to make sure that all the women were safely in their huts. Almost immediately Amabosu and Madyadya came running into the camp from the far end, past Cephu's camp, picking their feet up high in the air so that more than ever they seemed to be floating above the ground they trod. They came right up to the fire and squatted down either side of it, the front of the trumpet still held on Madyadya's shoulder as Amabosu warbled softly into the other end.

I noticed that the trumpet was still wet; it must have been given a "drink" just before it was carried into the camp. Now both youths stood up, and with Amabosu singing all the time, in reply to the song of the men, Madyadya took the end of the trumpet in his hands and waved it up and down, passing it through the flames of the molimo fire and over the heads of all of us sitting there. Some of the men took up hot ashes and rubbed them over the trumpet, and some even put live coals in at the far end. As Amabosu sang harder and louder, sparks flew out over Madyadya's shoulder, disappearing into the night with the song.

Then the two of them went dancing off, around the camp once and into the forest. There were a few last defiant bellows from the direction of the river, and no more was heard. The men stopped singing and prepared to eat. Two caldrons had been boiling over the fire, and both were now ready. One contained rice, the other a kind of spinach made from the leaves of the manioc plant. Eaten together they are delicious. I wondered if there would be any precedence as to who should eat first, or if there would be any ritual, but there

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765 baby was too young to know what was going on, and so could not
533 tell the others what he saw; possibly simply because it did not matter very much anyway, for the Song was not only Beautiful, it was Good and Powerful.

It took me some time to realize just how important song was. That first night I just thought of it as being a beautiful sound. After we had eaten the food that had been offered to the molimo we sang again, and at one point the younger men got up and danced around the fire, excitedly, but without any of the frivolity that would come later. This was the first night of the molimo and everyone was on his best behavior. Then when the dancing was over we heard the trumpet again, and as we sang it sang back to us, getting farther and farther away. As it went it carried our song with it, deeper and deeper into the forest. Finally we could hear it no more, and only the echoes of our own voices came back to us from the night.

765 Not long after that old Moke stretched and yawned and said
533 that he was tired and that everyone should go to sleep and let him
513 sleep. But the younger men paid no attention and went on singing, so Moke resignedly joined in. But after another half-hour, when it was not very long before dawn, even the younger men decided to
[372] quit. Moke picked up the log he had been sitting on, the end of
[373] which was glowing in the hot ashes, and shuffled back to his hut, swinging the log so that it glowed brightly and lit his way across the camp. Manyalibo simply stretched out where he was, right beside the molimo fire, and went to sleep there. A number of youths did likewise, their hunting nets making comfortable beds, but I went back to my hut. I found Kenge there, fast asleep. He was on my bed, wrapped in my blanket, snoring contentedly, and the hut was filled with smoke from the fire he had lit beside him.

765 In spite of the hunting that had to be done each day, the men
533 sang in this way every night. And every night we looked to see who
578
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some convenient branch or tree stump. Sometimes, when hunting, nets have to be set up rapidly, and anyone whose net has become tangled through poor preparation and coiling can spoil the chances of all the others.

The women have little to do by way of preparation for the hunt, other than making sure of the strength of the bark tump line by which they carry their baskets. They put some food in these in case the day's hunt is a long one, and they wrap a glowing ember from the family fire in large, damp leaves, and sit down and wait for the men to set off.

In normal times there is often a dance before everyone departs for the hunt. Men and women circle the camp, singing a hunting song, looking from right to left, clapping their hands and leaping extravagantly in imitation of the animals they hope to catch. But this was rare during the days of the molimo as all felt the lack of rest.

Another form of hunting magic, if you can call it that, was a paste made from various parts of an antelope, particularly the heart and the eye. The charred flesh is mixed with spittle and ground to a paste, then put in an inverted antelope horn and stuck in the ground near the family fire. Just before going on the hunt, members of the family smear one another with some of the paste, using a twig to dig it out of the horn. It is difficult to say whether this form of magic is of Pygmy or Negro origin. I rather think the latter, because only a few families practiced it, and they were highly criticized by the others as being antisocial. They were trying to get success for themselves at the expense of the others. On one such occasion a family had a long run of good luck, the animals always falling into their net, while others had no luck at all. It was decided that this must have been due to *anjo*, as the medicine was called, so everyone, including the offenders, agreed that the only thing to do was to destroy the horns that held the medicine. Everyone who had such a magic horn gave it to old Moke and promised not to make any more

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selfish magic. Moke threw the horns in a fire and no more was said. It so happened that the family in question continued to have good luck for some time.

Hunting, for a Pygmy group, is a co-operative affair—net-hunting particularly. The use of private magic is frowned on, though there is no law against it. The sacred hunting fire is all that they consider right and necessary, and this is found throughout the forest. It is thought to secure the blessing of the forest which provides the game, and to bring good luck to the entire group. Even those groups that hunt mainly with bow and arrow, hunt not as individuals, but for the group as a whole. For the net hunters it is impossible to hunt alone. Men, women and children all have to co-operate if the hunt is to be successful.

The "Fire of the Hunt" simply involves the lighting of a fire at the base of a tree a short distance from the camp. In other Pygmy groups I have seen a variation in which the fire is lighted within the camp, special sticks around it pointing in the direction the hunt is going to take. In this case the fire is surrounded by a long and heavy vine laid in a circle on the ground, and when the game is brought home it is placed within this circle before being divided. But this particular group, and others in the area, were less formal.

I remember one morning in particular when we went to kindle the Fire of the Hunt outside the camp, because it was the day that old Cephu committed one of the greatest sins possible in the forest.

I doubt if any of us had managed to snatch more than two hours' sleep, and we were all quiet while preparing for the hunt. In a Pygmy camp this is the surest danger signal of all, for usually everyone is talking and laughing and shouting rude remarks from one end of the camp to the other. It was not only that we were tired, but of late Cephu had refused to contribute to the molimo basket, and that morning he had been heard to call out, in his loudest voice, that he was fed up with the molimo of "that camp over there." Even though he always

765 Even though he[1] always
978 made his camp a short distance off it was close enough to be thought
152 of as the same camp, and whether or not we appreciated his presence
621 we thought of his camp and ours as being the same. Even his unwillingness to take part in the molimo was accepted, to maintain some semblance of unity; but this sudden statement made it impossible to ignore Cephu's feeling of rivalry any longer. Rather than cause an open breach, everyone in the main camp kept his thoughts to himself and was silent.

224 About an hour after dawn, four or five youths with their nets and
• 372 spears went off to light the hunting fire. I went with them, and only when we had crossed the Lelo and were on the other side did they speak. Then it was about trivialities, and soon they were chatting and laughing as though nothing were wrong. Shortly afterward we were joined by half a dozen of the younger married men, the most active hunters, and we lit the fire at the top of the hill. Leaves and twigs were piled around the base of a young tree, and an ember brought from the camp set them ablaze. More leaves were thrown on so that dense clouds of smoke went billowing up to the invisible sky, until finally the flames burst through with a great roar of victory.
[182] There was no great ritual or ceremonial, but somehow this act put the hunters in harmony with the forest and secured its blessing and assistance for the day's hunt. The Pygmies regard fire as the most precious gift of the forest, and by offering it back to the forest they are acknowledging their debt and their dependence.

224 As we sat around waiting for the others, one or two couples passed
[222] by. They were going ahead so they would have extra time for gathering mushrooms on the way. They paused to chat and then walked
224 on, lightly, swiftly, and gaily. Before long the main body of hunters
372 arrived and asked where Cephu was. We had not seen him. It
578 seemed that he had left the camp shortly after us but instead of
156 passing by the hunting fire had followed a different path. Someone suggested that he was building a fire of his own. This brought cries

[1] [i.e., Cephu. - Analyst]

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of protest that not even Cephu would do such a thing. There was much shaking of heads, and when Ekianga arrived and was told what had happened he stood still for a moment, then turned around, looking in all directions to see if there was any sign of smoke from another fire. He said just one word, "Cephu," and spat on the ground.

By the time we got to the place where we were to make our first cast of the nets everyone was more silent and miserable than ever. It did not make matters any better to find Cephu there already, contentedly sitting over a fire eating roast plantains. He looked up and greeted us in a friendly way, and when asked why he had followed his own path he opened his eyes wide and softly said that he had misunderstood and taken the wrong trail. There were angry remarks, but Cephu ignored them all and went on munching at his plantain, smiling at everyone in his kind, gentle way.

Ekianga and a few others made a brief reconnaissance, and when they came back they gave instructions as to the best direction for setting up the nets. The womenfolk, who had been foraging around for mushrooms and nuts, picked up their baskets and went ahead with the small children. They trod lightly and made no noise beyond an occasional crunch of a rotten branch, buried deep beneath the carpet of leaves. We all spread out in a long semicircle, each man knowing exactly who should be to his right and who to his left. I went with Maipe, who had been sent by Njobo with his net. We soon lost sight and sound of the others, but Maipe knew just where he would be expected to set up his net, and he took a short cut. I lost all sense of direction and could not even tell on which side of us the women were waiting for the signal to beat in toward our nets. We followed a little stream and paused by an enormous outcrop of huge stone boulders, almost perfectly square in shape, some of them eight feet across each face. Maipe looked around, then sat down to wait. After a few minutes Moke's nephew appeared to our left, stringing his net out through the undergrowth as he came.

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women gathered around, chattering away gaily and asking for news of the village.

The girls were Amina, daughter of an important BaBira subchief, and her cousin. Her father was hoping, she said, that she might be allowed to stay for a few days and bring him back some meat. She obviously knew the Pygmies well, because without waiting to be asked she distributed the plantains. She said she would keep the manioc flour until the meat began to come in. Apparently she was well liked, because as soon as people heard of her presence they came over to shake her hand, in the manner of villagers, grasping each other's wrists. Kenge told me all about her, and said that her father was one of the least animal-like villagers. He asked me which of the two girls I thought looked the more attractive. I said Amina, without a doubt. She was the most beautiful girl I had seen in a long time; the BaBira are by no means noted for their good looks. Amina was tall and a warm brown in color. She carried herself with the inborn grace of Bantu women; her eyes were deep and thoughtful; her expression was kind and gentle. Yes, she was certainly the more beautiful of the two. Kenge nodded thoughtfully and changed the conversation.

That night I sat up late with the men, and when I went back to my hut I was surprised not to see any bachelors sleeping on the floor as they usually did. But three logs were placed beside the bed and were glowing cheerfully. I sat down on the edge of the bed and found, as I had expected, that Kenge had curled up in my blanket. He was considerate enough, on such occasions, not to take my blanket onto the floor, but rather to take half of the bed. So I crawled in beside him and was about to say something when I realized that the body beside me was considerably taller than Kenge, and very differently shaped. It was Amina.

It was a difficult moment, but I could see the whole situation at once. I had become the center of a nice political maneuver. The

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765 not simply run; they seemed to float over the ground at tremendous
535 speed, their feet high in the air. I saw why I had been told not to
481 come out, because the youths that were armed with sticks and branches on the flanks of the trumpets kept on lashing out viciously, at imaginary intruders. When Ekianga, or any of the others who were running about independently, beating on roof tops and tearing off leaves, came too close, they had to leap from side to side to avoid being hit. Each person seemed concerned only with what he was doing. Nobody so much as looked at anyone else.

765 Then the rest of the men came out of their huts, one by one,
533 went over to the kumamolimo and began singing. It was no tenta-
372 tive, sleepy sing-song, as it was on many mornings, but singing in real earnest, as loud and as vigorous as at the height of the night. The molimo fire was fanned up into a blaze, and youths ran swiftly around the camp picking up bits of wood from everywhere, dancing back to the kumamolimo and throwing them onto the fire. Then, with a wild rush, the two trumpets joined together and were surrounded by a single dancing forest, and sounding a martial air they tramped around the edge of the fire and disappeared into the trees. They seemed to cross the river and climb up the hill on the far side, until the sound of our own voices drowned the more distant music of the trumpets.

765 For the whole of that day everyone's nerves seemed to be on edge.
152 Asofalinda was in a rage about something and she strode up and down the length of the camp, shaking her arm and pointing at everyone in turn, telling them they were all lazy good-for-nothings. Masisi was in one of his worst tempers and lashed out with an acid tongue at anyone foolish enough to try and talk to him. Manyalibo sulked and said it was pretty poor that it should be so difficult to fill one molimo basket. There should be two, three, or even four baskets, and they should be full all the time, he said. He made some remark about Masamba's not having done much to help, so Masamba threw

an empty basket at him and said, "There, you make so much noise, go and fill it yourself." Even before the hunt went off there were two full baskets hanging up, and by evening there were four.

The change between the atmosphere of the morning and that of the evening was unbelievable. Usually when a day starts off in such ill humor it continues in that way to the bitter end. But the hunt seemed to restore everyone's good spirits, even though it was not outstandingly successful. I did not go on the hunt, but stayed in camp. And all day long the girls were singing in Kondabate's house, and the old woman was with them.

After we had eaten the evening meal Manyalibo went around the camp himself and took a piece of wood from the fire outside each hut, placing them all on the molimo fire. Then, before it was completely dark, the men gathered to sing. Even Cephu was there, and the singing was light and cheerful. The girls that had been in Kondabate's hut came out as soon as we started. They had painted their bodies with black kangay juice, and in their hair they had twined circlets of vine, one strand of which stuck way out in front, over their foreheads, with a small bunch of feathers dangling from the end. They kept together in a tight little group, their bodies swaying in unison to the songs of the men. Then they began to dance, still so close together that I could not see between them. They danced all around the group, forcing us closer and closer to the fire. In a snaking, graceful line they seemed to take charge of the music, increasing the tempo until the men were as exhausted as they were, and we all stopped for a rest.

By then it was dark, and I expected the girls and the rest of the women and children to retire to their huts. But they had built a fire of their own at the edge of the molimo group, and there they all sat, chatting inconsequentially as though they did this every night. It was then that I first noticed the old woman. Under a great headdress of vine and feathers her hatchet face looked more angular than

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this direction and that; even her fingers each seemed to have a dance of its own. But her head was still, and her eyes were fixed on those of Kondabate.

At this point Kondabate handed the banja to another of the women standing nearby and led the young girls right into the center of the men's group, dancing in a close circle around the molimo fire. As they moved around, the men stood up and made room for them, and now the singing came almost entirely from the women. The men just stood and stamped and clapped and growled a bass accompaniment. The girls danced more and more wildly, but their heads and eyes were always turned toward the molimo fire, no matter how violent the body movement. After nearly half an hour the old woman, still crouching, ran into the center after the girls, and turning to face them from the far side of the fire she drove them slowly backward, back until they were lost among the others at the edge of the group. The singing was quieter, and in a few minutes it faded away altogether. Not a word was spoken.

After a short rest the singing started again, and this time there was no mistaking it—the women were leading. Manyalibo's wife picked up the banja and beat them, sharply and decisively, and the girls began the song. The men followed in obedient chorus. Once again, as the song grew faster, the old woman began to twitch until her whole body was alive with movement. Then she sprang up and came into the center of the kumamolimo alone. For an instant she stood there, and her head moved sharply from side to side. It was like the movement of a bird, keeping a wary eye open for possible foes. As she began to dance she seemed to sink slowly into the ground, her knees folding up like a concertina, her body bending at the waist; but always her head stuck out in front, jerking from side to side, eyes staring and expressionless.

She circled the fire three times, looking out and upward into the night, but unseeing; then as if satisfied that she was alone and un-

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765 observed she flung her head and her whole body around and faced
562 the fire directly. She was about seven or eight feet away from it. She
535 advanced slowly and cautiously, two steps forward, one step back,
533 her attention riveted on the flames. The singing was louder and faster,
372 but she refused to be hurried. At her own pace she approached closer and closer until it seemed impossible that she could stand the heat. She hesitated at the brink of the fire, her frail body gleaming with sweat, her face glowing and trembling. She made as if she was going to pounce on the fire, but whirled around at the last moment and danced quickly back to where the women were singing, watching her, eagerly and anxiously. She sat down on her haunches and accepted a steaming bowl of liko.

The singing did not stop this time but went on quietly at a slower tempo. The men made no attempt to move back closer to the fire. After about ten minutes the old lady, apparently refreshed and as full of vigor as ever, danced back into the men's circle, with Kondabate at her side. Their movements were perfectly co-ordinated, even to the twitching of their heads; as they sank down close to the
765 ground they might have been one person. But as they neared the
562 fire, again having circled it several times, the old woman sprang to
535 her feet and ran swiftly around to the far side and crouched there,
372 staring at Kondabate through the flames. They started circling once more, each keeping her eyes on the other, moving from side to side so that they were always opposite each other. But now they were closer to the fire than they had ever been and on their hands and knees they passed through the hot ashes, as though trying to reach each other through the flames.

Finally Kondabate retreated and squatted down at the edge of the circle, her body twitching just as the old woman's had done, her eyes staring and empty as she gazed at the molimo fire. The men heaped more wood on the flames, which were beginning to die down.
[533] Now they were singing as loudly as the women, stamping on the

ground with their feet and dancing with their arms and bodies, but never moving from where they stood. The old woman grew taller and more upright. Her bent old frame straightened out and she stood proudly, arms at her side, bent at the elbows so that her hands were out in front. Those hands had a life of their own, pointing and gesticulating and dancing with infinite grace at the end of motionless arms. The old woman no longer looked from side to side. She knew she had nothing to fear now, that she was the victor. And when she stooped once more to approach the fire she did not stoop so low, and each step was a step forward. As the singing quickened so did her steps, until with a burst of frenzied shouting she was driven right into the flames.

She seemed to hover there an instant, that skinny old crone who should have been burned to a cinder in a flash. Then she whirled around and kicked out with her feet, scattering the sacred molimo fire in all directions. Blazing logs and glowing embers alike she scattered, right among the circle of men surrounding her. And then she danced away, erect and proud. The men, without even faltering in their song, quickly gathered all the scattered embers and threw them back onto the remaining coals, and then for the first time they moved in a dance of their own. They danced in a wild circle, and as they danced their bodies swayed backward and forward, facing the fire, as though by imitation of the act of generation they were giving the fire new life. And as they danced the flames slowly began to rise, and as they rose the men danced all the more violently, until they had brought the fire of the molimo back to life.

Twice more this happened. Each time the old woman made a more determined effort to stamp the fire out of existence. And each time the strangely beautiful and exciting erotic dance of the men gave it new life. Finally the old woman conceded defeat and retreated among the others. Shortly afterward all the women disappeared, and

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765 the men rearranged themselves at the kumamolimo without making
562 any mention of what had happened.

I looked at Moke, and found him staring at me curiously. He understood my question and nodded. Yes, this was what he had told me I was yet to see.

765 There is an old legend that once it was the women who "owned"
562 the molimo, but the men stole it from them and ever since the
793 women have been forbidden to see it. Perhaps this was a way of reminding the men of the origin of their molimo. There is another old legend which tells that it was a woman who stole fire from the chimpanzees or, in yet another version, from the great forest spirit. Perhaps the dance had been in imitation of this. I did not understand it by any means, but somehow it seemed to make sense.

562 The woman is not discriminated against in BaMbuti society as she is in some African societies. She has a full and important role to
462 play. There is relatively little specialization according to sex. Even the hunt is a joint effort. A man is not ashamed to pick mushrooms and nuts if he finds them, or to wash and clean a baby. A woman is free to take part in the discussions of men, if she has something relevant to say. In fact, it was the apparent absolute dominance of the male in the molimo that had seemed to be the exception.

562 But now even in this the woman had come into her own. She had
372 asserted her prior claim to the fire of life, and her ability to destroy
182 it, to extinguish life. Or had she been destroying it? Perhaps when she was kicking the fire out in all directions among the menfolk she was giving it to them, for them to gather and rebuild and revitalize with the dance of life.

765 I was trying to puzzle it all out when the singing started again,
533 and I saw that the old woman had returned, alone. All the others were in their huts, and the men seemed to be singing as though by their song they could drive the last remaining female away. They sang louder and harder, but she kept circling the kumamolimo, keep-

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MOLIMO: THE DANCE OF DEATH

The evening meal was a good one, as the Pygmies had brought in far more meat than they allowed to the villagers, and in return for what they had given away they had received generous portions of rice, beans, groundnuts and manioc, and a few of the tiny bitter tomatoes which blend so well with manioc leaves and groundnuts in the making of a sauce. When it was dark, the women and children retired almost immediately, and the men gathered at the central fire where four upright poles indicated the Pygmy version of a *baraza*, or men's meeting place. At first, several villagers came to see what was going on, and the Pygmies sang and danced for them. They sang and danced until the villagers, tired after a heavy day's work in the plantations, went to bed. Then the men really began to sing. They sang and sang until it seemed almost as though we were back in the forest. But any time there was a strange sound, and it was suspected that there might be a villager lurking about, they stopped. They had guards posted all around to make sure they were not caught unawares.

It must have been about three o'clock in the morning when the molimo made its appearance. It came into the camp preceded by two youths holding glowing firebrands in their hands. Waving the brands high in the air, then swinging them down to touch the ground, they laid a fiery path for the molimo to follow. It was stately and imposing. Following this path of glowing cinders the molimo circled the village several times and then came to rest by the fire, where it sang very quietly. Just as I wondered if it was really going to sing as it did in the forest it moved off, and the tempo increased. Surrounded now by all the youths, the molimo started running around, faster and faster, making lightning swoops on the group of older men who were sitting by the fire. The rest of the men were either dancing in a frenzy around the fire itself, as if protecting it, or else they were with the molimo. I heard a crunching sound as the molimo plowed through a small field of sugar cane at the edge of the vil-

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Mbuti

765 534 lage, and I heard leaves being ripped off roofs and the dried mud beaten from walls.

765 533 781 [513] There was a subtle change of atmosphere, and a tremendous air of expectancy. By their insistent singing the older men seemed to be trying to avert some disaster, as did the youths by their dancing. Moke allowed nobody to sleep or rest except for a very brief spell when he kept half a dozen men singing while the others dozed as best they could around the fire. Then he woke us up and goaded us all into singing harder than ever. The molimo had left and was evidently playing havoc in the Negro village. But as we sang it came sweeping back into the camp from behind Ekianga's house. 765 781 535 534 372 The two fire-dancers in front sent showers of sparks up into the air and onto the ground. The molimo made straight for the central fire. It knocked us aside—even old Tungana—and slowly and deliberately it trampled through the fire, scattering it to all sides.

The men who had been sitting were on their feet at once, and hurriedly threw the scattered logs back into the center and joined the dancers in bringing life back to the fire. But the molimo was insistent, and the next time all the men joined with it. Reluctantly at first, then sharing the inevitability of the occasion they too danced and stamped among the flaming logs until there was nothing left but glowing coals. As the pace of the dance increased, the embers were scattered wider and wider, until the whole of the village seemed to be carpeted with winking red eyes. The molimo was once again blowing martial blasts, and the men accompanied it with a deep, rhythmic chant. All except a few of the elders followed it on its last tour of the camp, slow and majestic, tramping out the fire of life until there was only one glowing ember left. I saw Moke sadly sit down on the ground beside it, pick it up in his hands and fondle it. [276] He took a cigarette butt from behind his ear and lighted it with the coal. He put the coal carefully back on the ground, stood up and stepped on it until it too was extinguished. Then he turned his back on us all and disappeared into his hut.

on us all and disappeared into his hut. The molimo, surrounded by a triumphant entourage, now left the village, and we escorted it back to the forest. Dawn was breaking, streaking the sky with gold and crimson, and as soon as we had found a suitable temporary hiding place we returned to the village.

It was in a dreadful state of chaos. Black ashes and cinders covered the ground everywhere; manioc plants were uprooted, sugar cane trampled down, chairs smashed, leaves torn off roofs and the mud from many walls crumbled on the ground. The Negro villagers were full of complaints, but in the Pygmy village men and women were silent, sleepily clearing up the wreckage and preparing for the midday feast. Nobles and headmen began arriving from neighboring villages, and as even the four poles that represented the Pygmy baraza had been smashed to the ground, they took possession of my veranda. They had come to supervise the ritual feast which, according to their custom, marked the end of the mourning ceremonies for Balekimito. They were a little surprised to find that the elima occupied the house in which Balekimito had died, but the Pygmies were in no mood to argue. They just shrugged their shoulders and said it was a good house. As far as they were concerned they had finished mourning their personal loss as soon as their mother had been buried. From then onward they had been fulfilling their duty to the forest by rejoicing with the molimo for the long and good life that had been granted to the old lady. They had acknowledged the gift of the fire of life from the forest, and the forest's right and power to withdraw it; they had acknowledged and accepted the facts of life and death as both being, equally, the gift of their god.

But if the villagers wanted them to have a formal feast to end the mourning, and were willing to give the food, they did not object.

The food was cooked and laid out in the center of my veranda, which when the sun was high was the only cool and shady place in the village. This meant that the villagers were pushed to the edge as

3: Tumbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

THE WORLD OF THE VILLAGE

The familiar night sounds of the forest were replaced by the cries of drunks coming home from a dance at the nearby Hotel de Bière, where an antique Victrola ground out records of the African version of the Calypso, imported from the coast. In the Negro village there were constant fights—not the wordy fights of the Pygmies, but good old-fashioned fisticuffs. These were likely to occur at any time of night, depending on how late it was when an outraged husband, returning from a rendezvous with his current girl friend, reached his own hut to find his wife in bed with someone else.

In our small Pygmy village the fires were all brought inside at night, and the smoke helped to keep away the mosquitoes. The doors were pulled tight shut, and nobody slept out in the open. Just an occasional murmured comment on the noise made by "those black savages" was all that was heard, none of the usual cheerful gossip that used to go on every night until, one by one, the hunters fell asleep.

But in the very dead of night I could hear the sound of crickets from the forest, reminding me that it was, after all, not so far away, and all around us. Sometimes when the moon was full I wandered around the sleeping village, to the edges of the plantations. There the forest stood up into the night like a great black wall, surrounding this small circle, cut so ineffectively out of its very heart. It rose up all around, confident in the knowledge that it would soon claim its own and grow back more thickly than ever, where it had been cut. There were several such abandoned villages nearby, not long abandoned; yet already the forest towered above them in the unsmiling triumph of inevitability. The forest destroyed everything but its own. Only against the machine age, which had barely reached it, was it powerless.

In the very early hours the forest made itself felt, but close as it was it faded far away with the coming of dawn. The morning sounds of cocks crowing, goats bleating, and the elephants of the Station de

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4
Mbuti
Congo-Kinshasa FO1

P C 123 177 571 572 After some persuasion he agreed to allow me to come out to his fishing camp. He was known to dislike and actively discourage visitors, so I was not surprised when he was vague as to the camp's whereabouts, merely saying that his friends would bring me there the following week. His "friends" turned out to be Kelemoke and Hari, a young Pygmy who was a cousin of Kenge, from a village the far side of Ngoma's. The four of us set off before dawn one morning.

P 123 481 484 Even when a whole camp is on the move, men, women and children, the pace of the Pygmy is swift. But when there are just two or three active young hunters they maintain a steady trot for however far they have to go. I found myself running to keep up, and we only stopped twice during the entire journey. The first time was when we were not far from the Lelo River. We rested among the ruins of an old deserted camp, and we each ate a banana and smoked a cigarette. The second time was shortly after midday, when we met Moke and another on their way back from Kaweki's camp. They were surprised that we had come so far; they themselves intended to stop over in one of the old camps for the night. Each of them carried P [372] a smoldering ember wrapped in a leaf, in one hand, and a bow and bunch of arrows in the other.

C 754 578 P 177 They warned us that Kaweki was not well, and said that it was the *dawa nde BaNgwana*—the magic of the BaNgwana. This made Kenge, Hari and Kelemoke all cluck their tongues, because the *dawa* of the BaNgwana is the most powerful of all. Hari said that he had heard that Musafili was jealous because Kaweki was making so much money with his fish. Kenge, however, said that he thought it was Kaweki's own people, the BaBira of Babama village. They were offended, he said, that Kaweki should live in the forest with the C [776] BaMbuti instead of in his own village. They suspected him of being in league with the evil spirits of the forest. Kelemoke nodded and said yes, it was true that Kaweki fell ill every time he returned to the village, and that it must be the strongest kind of witchcraft to reach

others in almost total darkness. It must have been quite an old camp, for all the leaves on the huts were dry and brown.

We crept right up to the nearest hut without being seen, and then Kidaya ran lightly across the clearing and gave the sleeping youth of her choice a sound thwack with her whip. He leaped up, not so much in fear or anger as in surprise and in shame that he should have been caught. He grabbed for his bow and picked up a small stone which he fired back at Kidaya as he ran away. Kidaya laughed with delight. This was a sure sign that her overtures had been accepted.

The whole of the camp was awake before the rest of the girls had had time to whip more than a few boys, and it soon became alive with lashing whips and flying sticks and stones. The women and children crept into the backs of their huts for shelter, while the men ran from rubbish dump to rubbish dump, gathering the banana skins they used as ammunition. When they could not find any, they used whatever came to hand. A slice of banana skin fired from a taut bow at close quarters can be quite painful, and the girls found that the boys were putting up a good fight. So they picked up a few vine baskets that had been left lying around, and using these as shields they advanced on their quarry.

The fight got more and more fierce, and at one time the boys managed to drive the girls right back into the huts. Then they stood at the entrances and fired their pellets of banana skin inside, giving rise to squeals of anguish. But Kidaya was too tough to be done down so easily. She emerged from her shelter without even a basket for protection, and made a dash for the nearest fire. As she bent down to pick up a burning log, her particular boy friend fired a pellet that struck her on her buttocks with a smack. Kidaya spun around and hurled the log with all her might; then she rubbed her backside affectionately and smiled. The other girls also began throwing logs, and soon there was hardly a fire left in the camp, and burning logs were scattered everywhere.

while the men pretended to be honey gatherers, dancing in a long curling line through the camp, looking up with exaggerated gestures as if searching for some sign of bees, the women danced in another long line through the trees at the edge of the camp, pretending they were the bees. The two lines gradually came closer and closer together, the women singing in a soft, rhythmic buzz, buzz, buzz, while the men pretended to hear but still not to see them. Then the women seized burning logs of wood and attacked the men, tapping the logs on their heads so that a shower of sparks fell over them, stinging them like the sting of the honeybee. At that they all gathered up the embers, and where some of the younger men had been building an elaborate hearth of special woods and special leaves, moistened to just the right extent, they lit the great honey fire. There was no flame, but dense clouds of smoke billowed upward. Men blew on their honey whistles, women clapped their hands, and everyone burst into the song of magic that would travel with the smoke and call the bees to come and make more honey.

On such occasions I found that Masisi and Cephu made their appearance more and more often, paving the way for a reunion at the next camp. When the time came for me to leave all animosities had been forgotten.

One day Kenge had gone off on some unknown mission and I decided to make a final pilgrimage to Apa Lelo, where the cycle had begun. This day of all days I wanted to be by myself, but there is something about the forest, not exactly threatening, but challenging, that dares you to travel alone. I had to refuse several Pygmies who wanted to come with me, and once I was well away I was glad. I knew what the challenge was, for to be alone was as though you were daring to look on the face of the great God of the Forest himself, so overpowering was the goodness and beauty of the world all around. Every trembling leaf, every weathered stone, every cry of an animal

415 177 439 Also obtained from the Negroes are the cooking pots that all pygmy women own, essential for water storage and cooking. These pots are made by Negro women, and by relatively few Negro women at that; pottery making is a specialist occupation.

• 372 **Fire.**—The pygmies do not know how to make fire, nor do many of the Negroes with whom they are associated. Throughout all this countryside people keep fires going, and when one fire dies out the people will borrow it from each other. While on the march the pygmies carry glowing embers with them; they can keep a brand lighted for ten miles during a rainstorm. They do this by wrapping the burning ends in green leaves, and swinging it up and down; every two or three minutes they uncover it a bit and blow on it. At night these brands serve as torches. The Negroes have special wood which they use for torches but the pygmies do not. Their firewood is always fallen wood, and therefore always somewhat rotten and punky.

342 462 [824] **Houses.**—When the pygmies have chosen a new camp, the women go out into the forest a little way to collect building materials. Each woman brings in a bundle of sticks about half an inch thick, and from three to six feet in length; she also brings a bundle of sarcophrynium leaves. She thrusts the ends of the sticks in the ground around in a circle about five feet in diameter. Then she gets inside the circle, and bends opposite pairs of sticks inward, and ties them together. She does this in the following manner: first she takes a stick in each hand, then she brings them together, then she holds the two with one hand, and wraps with the other.

342 462 476 This technique is not easy; it is much easier if two women work together, and in practice this is usually the case. The first woman, who is to

After this come the various diseases which kill the pygmies. Pneumonia and dysentery are the greatest killers; infection is rare. Far less important than disease even is the action of hostile animals—elephants, buffalo, or leopards. Once in a while an old leopard, too old to catch antelope, will dare run the risk of sneaking into a pygmy camp at night. The pygmy houses have no doors, and the leopard may slink into a house and grab a pygmy. At the noise so created, other pygmies will wake up and attack the leopard with spears or firebrands. Sometimes the leopard wins completely and carries off his victim's body, to munch at leisure. Sometimes he drops the mangled corpse, and at other times the pygmy may survive. I have seen one pygmy woman who had most of her face bitten away by a leopard and who still lived. The pygmy resistance to wound infections is incredibly great, although they will die like flies from pneumonia.

Another occasional cause of death is burning. Pygmies are unusually restless during the sleeping hours of the night, and individuals get up frequently to relieve themselves. After doing so the pygmy seldom goes back to bed immediately. He usually sits in front of his hut for a while, in front of the fire. Here he will often light up his pipe and take a deep puff of tobacco, apparently to get the maximum effect of the nico-

165 tine in the least possible time. Some-
372 times this puff knocks him out; he
[276] faints, and falls forward into the fire. Very often there are others up about the same business, who, when they hear the thud, will run over and pull the victim out of the fire, in which case he will survive with bad burn scars. Sometimes, however, no one hears him, and the burns are fatal.

765 When a pygmy dies, his kinsmen
[764] bury him near the camp. They get
[273] bananas or wine ready-made from their Negroes, and a regular bout of wine drinking begins. The members of the deceased's family cover themselves with white pipe clay, and weep and wail for several days. This noisy manifestation of grief is intermittent, and formally controlled. Sometimes they even put it off for two or three days until all the relatives who have been away visiting at other camps can be gathered in. Most of it is done by women, who will weep and wail for a while in concert, then rest together, then weep together again for another spell. Anyone who is really overcome with emotion weeps quietly by him or herself, alone and without interruption.

768 After a few days of this the whole group will break camp and move on to some other site, unless there are strong objections to leaving. In any case, they never return to the grave, and never decorate or touch it.

[P.341-B]